

CHAIRSHOTS

ISSUE #1

\$1.00

WELCOME TO THE PREMEIRE EDITION

of **CHAIRSHOTS**. With the discontinuation of ARENA REPORT, a vacancy has opened up for a new pro wrestling newsletter. We hope to fill that void. We have an extremely talented team of writers, starting off with a refugee from ARENA REPORT, Jeff Bowdren. Jeff brings some pretty serious insight to his **SHOOTKICK** column and needs no introduction to grap fans. Also, thanks to Jeff for coming up with a lot of the catchy titles in **CHAIRSHOTS**. Next up is Pete Lederberg with **NERVE ENDINGS**. Pete was one of the original "hardcores" and has been involved with the sheet business for over 17 years. He is an extremely gifted writer and definately one of the most underexposed guys around. Mike Allen's **BRAIN DRAIN** reports not only some current inside news, but also offers a unique perspective to whats going on in the biz. As a special feature this issue we have an in depth interview with Jimmy Jett, who was a referee for Jarrett, Florida and crockett for a few years. Jimmy talks about breaking into the business as well as his personal observations of working with such greats as Ric Flair and Bruiser Brody. Robert VanKavelaar recalls his first ever live show. Bob is as genuine as they come and its reflected in his writing. Also included in this issue is a report on the Sunshine Wrestling Federation who are packing them in at arenas in South Florida. Next issue, in addition to the steady columnists and features will be the debut of a new column, **THE WRESTLING ZONE**. It will deal with much of pro wrestling's great history. And we want to near from **YOU!!** Your letters, comments, criticisms are really whats going to make this tning fly. I look forward to nearing from all of you. And last, but not least, i'd like to thank my dad who took me to my first live match back when I was a wee lad in 1973. Without him, this would have never been possible. We'll be back next month, so until then, enjoy the reading.

Barry Bow





SHOOTKICK

by Jeff Bowdren

Hello campers! Just when you and the wrestling world thought it was safe to go back into the water, we proudly present the return of provocative, sublimely interesting, sometimes lewd & crude....NO! I'm not talking about Mike Gunter's private video collection of Charlotte's finest strippers, I'm talking about the return of Shootkick!!

Hey, so I've been gone for awhile....shootkick me, okay? And maybe some of you feel let down because I wasn't able to follow through with my own sheet. Hey, you take a hit from the I.R.S. and come up with the operation capital to start a sheet pal! Anywho, we'll catch up with all the eligible kicks to the head we've missed over the last couple of months in the next issue-for now, allow me to get a man while he's down and deliver a stiff, and unfortunately not lethal, shot to the chops to Denton County, Texas' Father of the Year, Fritz Von Erich/Jack Adkisson. This one's for you Fritz, and hey! Your certainly the early favorite for the '93 award! Let's make the next heart attack a shoot and not a work, okay?

Sometimes, the business makes you shake your head in disgust. That was the case the other day when I was reading the Miami Herald and read some of the quotes Fritz had made following Kerry's suicide. He actually had the balls to say that Kerry's drug problem began after his motorcycle accident in 1986. What a joke. Fritz is so full of shit its unbelievable. It really angered me that after losing his 3rd son to a suicide, he would still Kay Fabe to protect what's left of his reputation. Well, this was no work or no kay fabe. This was real life interrupting a fantasy world.

The whole situation in Dallas is beyond pathetic. Your son has committed suicide by turning a handgun that you gave him on himself. This is 3rd son that has killed himself. Your grief has to be unfathomable. Yet your 1st reaction is to find somewhere to place the blame. Fritz chose to focus on the motorcycle accident. Hey Fritz, wake up and smell the coffee beans. Let's look at a few things without the rose-colored glasses that the members of the Dallas media must have been wearing all these years. You can B.S. the people with all that religious mumbo-jumbo, but I'm not buying what your selling. Kerry, or any of your other kids didn't suddenly acquire a substance abuse problem over the last few years. Kerry has had one for the better part of a decade, if not longer. David didn't die of enteritis, he overdosed. Kevin backed his car over his own kid, and I'm guessing that he wasn't a beacon of sobriety at the time. Chris was reportedly the biggest drug dealer in Dallas while he was still in high school. Mike was such a mess it indeed was a miracle he managed to live through the toxic shock syndrome. Hell, Kerry was caught in '83 coming over the border with a stash, but you played it up as angle with the Freebirds. Every bit of misery that your family suffered through was always an angle to you. It's no wonder your family is (or was) so fucked. I mean, how many red flags had to go up before you realized that your children were practically screaming for help? You, as their father-not their boss-at some point had to step in and see to it that your

kids were in desperate need of drug & psychological counseling. I'm not just saying this as some off the cuff comment. I work as a clerk at the county courthouse. I see drug addicts and alcoholics everyday come in who are in total denial, yet I can spot them a mile away. You saw your kids everyday, and if truly in your heart believed that your boys weren't doing drugs then you either the stupidest father in the history of the planet or deserved to be written up in some textbook, which examines denial. But, the unfortunate thing is that you ignored all the warning signs. You ignored it even when one of your featured performers came to you in late '84 and told you that the drug problem in World Class was so bad that someone would die within the next 6 months. It should have come as no surprise to you then when Gino Hernandez was found dead of a drug overdose shortly afterwards. But that was okay wasn't it? It was another angle you could use, just like you picked the bones of your dead son David in Feb of '84 like a vulture. It was sickening then and it was sickening every other time you used another tragedy for financial gain.

I had dinner one night with someone else who was a performer for you in the mid-80's. He told me stories about the kind of stuff that went on during a World Class booking meeting in those days, mainly regarding Fritz & his sons. I admit I roared with laughter because it seemed hilarious, almost like a 3 Stooges routine. But what it really showed was how uneducated & ill-prepared the boys were to deal with ordinary life, much less life under the microscope as wrestlings' modern day Hardy Boys. Fritz never seemed to realize the big picture about what a father really is. It's more than planting a seed. A father wears many hats. He has to be a friend, a confidante, a disciplinarian, an advisor and someone who provides guidance when necessary. He has to be there in good times and bad. The obvious conclusion is that Fritz Von Erich/Jack Adkisson, whatever you want to call him, failed his sons miserably. He taught them all about how to exist in the fantasy world of wrestling. It's a shame he couldn't have taught them a little about the real world. Sometimes kids have to learn things the hard way, but Fritz always figured it was easier to buy his kids out of harm's way. I'd like to think that someday Fritz will wake up and realize what he's done. Hey Fritz, how about taking a little parental responsibility and take Kevin to get some serious help. I'd have the guy on a around the clock suicide watch. Save the one son you have left.

And while I'm on this little tirade, is it just me or is anyone else wondering where the hell Doris Adkisson was while all this was going on. I mean, I know she's sort of portrayed as the loving, semi-mousey wife who was home keeping the homefires burning, but didn't this woman have some sort of responsibility a some point to stand up and say "I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar". Hey, Doris-you could've stepped in any time. It would have been nice to know that there was one responsible parent in the family. Fritz is no doubt a bastard, but I think it would've been nice at some point for you to step forward and say, "Screw wrestling, my sons need some serious help". Am I wrong here?

Finally, do me and yourself a favor. The next time you talk to your father, thank him. It could've been worse.....

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SUNSHINE WRESTLING FEDERATION

While a lot of the mat action in Florida has dried up, a local independent group has emerged with a serious following. The Sunshine Wrestling Federation, based out of Miami and using talent like Demon Hellstorm, Steve "Party Animal" Collins, Kevin Sullivan and others, is packing them in on a regular basis. Promoter Bill Brown's philosophy is simple: Give the fans quality matches and make sure everyone feels that they've gotten their money's worth. "We've been pretty successful, thus far. The SWF has some good workers like Demon, Night Rider, Rocco Gibraltar, and Sgt. Stan Steele. The fans know that these guys put out each and every match", said Brown. "We drew over 700 on our last show, and were expecting at least 2,500 for our big show on March 26 at Khoury League Field. Kevin Sullivan's going to be there facing Steve Collins in a grudge match. We'll also have a battle royal and a taped fists match." With an invite from Bill to come down and check out his latest card in South Miami on Feb. 25, Pete Lederberg and myself packed the car and made the trip.

SUNSHINE WRESTLING FEDERATION 2/25/93 SOUTH MIAMI H. S.

1st Match Ric "The Wrestling Orthopaedic Doctor" beat Sheik Abudulla Nyad Alfattukus (what?). I was back talking to Demon Hellstorm, so I missed this bout.

2nd Match Death Row 3260 and Sgt. Stan Steele (billed as being from the Miami Police Dept.) went to a great DQ. Death Row has a big following on these indy cards, and always has an entertaining match. Steele took some truly awesome **CHAIRSHOTS** outside the ring. Finish came as Death Row left Steele laying. DR then started heading back to the dressing room. Steele picked up a chair and nailed DR from behind. The two brawled near the entrance of the building, knocking over tables, chairs, etc. They wound up fighting back into the dressing room.

3rd Match Muhammed The Butcher beat "Nature Boy" Bobby Rogers in what was to have been a Jr. Heavyweight Title match. Muhammed subbed for Super Medic 2. Muhammed could pass legit for Abdullah's twin brother, mudflaps and all. Muhammed won after a wicked elbow drop (meat cleaver?), but wasn't awarded the title because he's about 500 lbs. Rogers attacked The Butcher's manager after the match, and Demon Hellstorm made the save. J. R. James, who was doing color at ringside had the line of the night concerning Butcher-"He's got more rolls than Holsum Bakery." Funny Stuff.

4th The wily veteran from Paradise Boh., Steve "Party Animal" Collins pinned Fidelista #1 after a wicked clothesline. Fidelista 1 and 2 have a pretty entertaining gimmick (Castro sympathizers) and had the crowd going pretty well. Collins took on both men after the match, and sent them back to the showers. Collins was accompanied to ringside by two of the High School's cheerleaders.

5th Match Demon Hellstorm, accompanied by his valet, Dark Angel and Manager, Vicious Vinnie Scarpo had an amateur exhibition with the wrestling coach of the high school, Coach Bardo. Hellstorm, a native of "The Gates Of Hell", has a pretty good entrance with smoke billowing out of the dressing room and heavy metal blaring over the loud-speaker. Demon had things under control until Rocco "The Garbage Man" Gibraltar nailed Demon with his garbage can. The next match began immediately which was.....



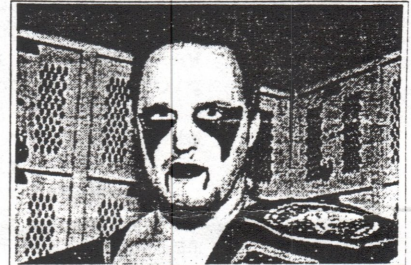
RINGSIDER 93

South Florida's Officially Sanctioned Professional Wrestling Program

Volume 1 February 93 FREE!

SOUTH MIAMI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL presents the SUNSHINE WRESTLING FEDERATION

Welcome to South Miami Senior High, and an exciting night of Professional Wrestling! Tonight, you'll experience the thrill and spills of today's top independent mat stars from the **Sunshine Wrestling Federation!** Several exciting matches are scheduled for tonight's card, including a "Double Main Event", one of which will put 15 of the toughest, meanest, nastiest grapplers from the SWF in the ring at one time in a 15-Man "Over-the-top-rope" Battle Royal, with the last wrestler remaining winning \$10,000 cold cash! In the first of the Co-Main Events, the SWF World Heavyweight Championship is up for grabs as **"DEMON HELLSTORM"**, managed by "Vicious" Vinne Scarpo, defends his title against the **"GARBAGE MAN" ROCCO GIBRALTA** in a Lumberjack match! Both of these competitors have met before, but this time it's for all the "gold", all the "money", and all the prestige of the SWF **WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP!** So sit back and enjoy an exciting night of professional wrestling brought to you by Southridge High School & the **SUNSHINE WRESTLING FEDERATION!**



DEMON HELLSTORM
SWF World Champion

VS.
THE "GARBAGE MAN"



6th Match Demon Hellstorm went to a DQ, with Rocco Gibraltar. Both of these guys have HUGE futures in front of them. Demon does some really good aerial maneuvers including his "Thunderroll" from the top rope. Rocco once again smacked Demon with his garbage can. Remember Honkytonk Man nailing Jake Roberts with his guitar a few years back. Couldn't hold a candle to this.

7th Match Rocco Gibraltar threw out Death Row 3260 to win the battle royal. The Butcher suffered a serious ankle injury (imagine Abdullah going over the top rope).

A good card. I'm looking forward to the big event on 3/26. Had a chance to chat with SWF Champ Demon Hellstorm for a while. Personable guy who talked about being trained by Adrian Street, his trip to Puerto Rico and more. Hope to have a serious interview with the guy in the future (at least before he heads to the majors). Also had an opportunity to talk with Penelope Paradise. A classy lady with some great wrestling ideas. Wonder if WCW has contacted her about joining the booking committee?



DOUBLE MAIN EVENT!

15 Man Over-The-Top-Rope
\$10,000
Battle Royal!

featuring 512lb Muhammad the Butcher



NERVE ENDINGS

BY PETE LEDERBERG

I'll start this column with some words of warning: Do not expect what you are about to read to be politically correct! For people that are hung up on that sort of thing, which unfortunately seems to be a great many of you, I will present some background information on myself first. I am 31 years old, have been a wrestling fan since 1975, a math teacher since 1986, and have coached (and played) many sports. I coached both boy's basketball and girl's volleyball at the high school level. As some of you could probably guess from my last name, I am also Jewish. I am putting all of this background info up front, because I want you to know that I have dealt with males and females of various denominations at many different levels. I try to judge and treat each person as an individual. My opinions are just that, mine, and I will voice them here, along with some historical perspective, and hopefully you'll get something out of it. My best wishes are that it at least makes you think.

I am a huge baseball fan. Lately, I've been upset by the ramblings of one of the world's biggest hippocrates, Jesse Jackson, in his demands on the Marge Schott issue. I don't agree with Schott's views. What makes me angry is a guy (Jackson) who publicly made racial slurs (against Jews) while running for president is now condemning someone for statements they supposedly made in private conversation, and asking for her to be suspended and fined, when he went unpunished and was allowed to run for president (I bring this up not because I'm outraged because of my religion, people say stupid things every day. I bring it up because of the hypocrisy).

What does any of this have to do with wrestling? Plenty, unfortunately. The "political correctness" issue has been running rampant in wrestling lately, the most recent "victim" being Cowboy Bill Watts. From what I understand to have happened, Watts was forced out of his position at WCW because of his views expressed in an interview he did for another publication. The funny thing is, in his interview, Watts expressed that the ideals of freedom of speech, etc. help make this country great. He got fired for having politically "incorrect" viewpoints. Is this what our country is coming to? It is, if all of you continue to go with "political correctness" instead of having your own mind (viewpoints), and having the guts to express them.

I remember back in 1982, Hacksaw Butch Reed and Sweet Brown Sugar (Skip Young) were being put on top and over everyone in the South Florida area. Crowds were really up and they were really over there due to a large black (see I didn't say "African-Americans") population in the area (actually many of them weren't Americans, they were Haitians). Anyway, one week Bruiser Brody came in and teamed with John Studd against them in Miami Beach. Sugar and Reed had a habit of running from opposite corners to the center of the ring, then jumping and trying to do a "high five". I don't ever recall them doing it without screwing it up. Truthfully, they were pretty bad workers. Brody was one of my fav-

orites. During the bout, Brody piledrove Sugar on the floor, rolled him into the ring and pinned him. My friends and I were really happy, as we were afraid that they were going to put Reed and Sugar over. Anyway, one of my friends and I lined up at the end of our row and ran to the middle, jumped and did the "high five" right. I guess we were the forerunners of what a lot of you call "smart" fans. My point was, we did it for fun, but also, because we liked Brody, and knew the other guys stunk. It wasn't a black-white thing, but easily could have been misconstrued as such.

One of my all time favorites was Killer Karl Kox. Kox was one of the funniest and most innovative interviews I've ever seen or heard. Today, most of his stuff would be censored. He did interviews, for example, talking about Tiger Conway Jr. calling him Tiger COONway. Think about his initials (KKK). Wrestling has always been different, and I suspect if the "politically correct" windbags have their way, there will be no more wrestling. Forget about the Japanese style working here, it's not a real sport, face it. The Japanese seem to be incorporating more gimmickry into their styles (so called Americanizing) now anyway. Many fans today forget that most of this country disdains wrestling, so we (the fans) have to be the ones to support it, not knock it down. Constructive criticism is always fine, but objectivity and perspective should be important factors. Realize that NO ONE knows a correct formula to cure all of wrestling's problems right now, and certainly no one is an expert, so don't fool yourself into thinking that you are. In the early days of wrestling bulletins, wrestlers would rarely give legit interviews to fans (kay-fabe). If you like things like the Torch Talks (I certainly do) remember what just happened to Bill Watts. There has always been a huge amount of paranoia around this sport, now here comes someone speaking their mind that never would have in the "old days", and he loses his job over it. Another irony is that many thought that Watts himself would someday fire someone over leaking info, much less doing an interview, to the sheets.

The political correctness issue has permeated this sport in violence, blood, treatment of gays, women, and minorities and many other areas. Do you want Jesse Jackson, or a women's rights activist dictating to you not only what you should watch for entertainment, but also how you should think? Think about it. Until next time.

WEDNESDAY
August 4, 8:30 p.m.
MIAMI BEACH
CONVENTION HALL

BLACK NINJA DEATH MATCH

Dusty Rhodes

-VS-

Kendo Nagasaki

Hacksaw Reed & Sweet Brown Sugar

-VS-

Big John Studd & Bruiser Brody

JIMMY JETT INTERVIEW: REFLECTIONS OF A REFEREE

BY BARRY ROSE

I recently had the opportunity to sit down and talk with pro wrestling referee, Jimmy Jett. Jimmy worked both the Memphis and Florida promotions from 1985-87, and then did some shots for the NWA for the next couple of years. Jimmy talks about breaking in the business, the Bruiser Brody-Lex Luger "shoot" from 1986, Ed "The Bull" Gantner, as well as the many aspects and facets of pro wrestling.

BR: HOW DID YOU BREAK INTO WRESTLING?

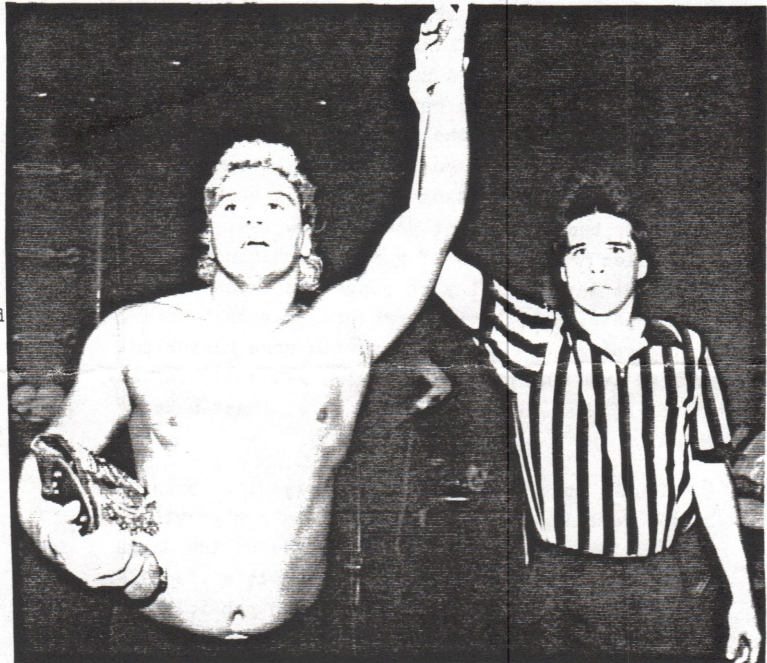
JJ: My first exposure to wrestling was about 1975. I was living in South Carolina and became a real fanatic about it. My father took me to the matches at the auditorium and I was really fascinated with the matches and the wrestlers themselves. As I got older, probably around the late seventies or early eighties, I started figuring out how the business worked. I got a few different newsletters and wanted to somehow get involved in the business, but I really thought that it was just a longshot because at the time the business was way more closed shop than it is now. You really had to know someone or be related to somebody to get into it. Several years went by and I had developed a few friendships and acquaintances and about the summer of 1985 I got involved with a small indy promotion in South Carolina with a guy by the name of Hoss Strickland. He was the promoter and he also worked with a hood in some of the top matches. I don't know this for a fact, but Hoss claimed he was one of the original assassins with Jody Hamilton. I've mentioned his name to some people in the business, some knew him and some didn't. I know for a fact that he started Kevin Sullivan. I ran into Kevin down in Florida and Kevin verified that, and that he had stayed at Hoss's house when he was first starting out. So, Hoss was pretty legit and he could sense somebody's interest, whether it was serious or just a passing thing. I started doing some ring announcing and a couple of months into that he started to let me do a little reffing. I had always watched referees real closely and I knew that I was never large enough to be a wrestler. I had paid close attention to Tommy Young, who was probably the best referee there ever was, and tried to emulate him as best I could. About late '85 I had developed a good friendship with Buddy Landel, who was working for Crockett. I was using the name Jimmy Landel, and he was real supportive in letting me do that. Well, Buddy was terminated from the group and wound up heading to Memphis. Two other guys who were doing jobs for Crockett, Jim and Mack Jeffers, were also on their way to Memphis as the Mod Squad. Buddy had mentioned that he might be able to get a slot opened up for me because the booker, Bill Dundee, was a friend of his. So, I traveled up to Tennessee with Jim and Mack and their manager, J. D. Costello, and we all lived together until we could afford to get a second apartment. For about the first month I basically got the boys drinks and traveled to all the towns. I wasn't really considered an outsider because of Buddy. He introduced me around and told the guys that I was okay, and within a few weeks a slot opened up and the first match I did was in a little town in Kentucky with Dutch Mantel and Bill Dundee. That was the first serious match that I had reffed in what I had considered a major promotion.

BR: WASN'T THERE SOME HEAT IN MEMPHIS CONCERNING A RUMOR ABOUT YOU BEING BILL DUNDEE'S SON?

JJ: What happened with that was that I was riding to the towns with Dundee and Buddy and had developed a pretty good friendship with Bill. He was the one who had decided that we would go with the name Jimmy Jett because my hair was really black and had a slight resemblance to Joan Jett. Well, it got to the point that there was starting to be some heat on me because the Memphis, Nashville, Evansville people thought that I was Bill Dundee's son. We had exact same haircuts and styles and I was in his presence quite a lot riding to and from towns. I think it was in a spot show in Tennessee when I was approached by Eddie Marlin and I was told that I needed to change the color of my hair because there was major heat about me being Dundee's kid which would equate with Dundee being in his late forties. They didn't want the fans to think that he was that old, so I had to change the color of my hair. I was scheduled to go back to South Carolina for a few days, and when I returned to Memphis my hair was a different color. Things worked out and I really didn't hear too much more about that again.

BR: WHAT WAS LAWLER LIKE?

JJ: Jerry Lawler is one of the most intelligent people in professional wrestling. He's made his reputation in Memphis not just in wrestling, but in other areas as well. He's an individual who picks and chooses the people he decides he's going to be nice to and I respect him, but he definitely wants things done his way and the way they



JIMMY WITH BILLY TRAVIS

have always been done and he's an extreme believer in protecting the business. It's well known within the business that he doesn't like people who are just starting out, he doesn't care for people who haven't paid their dues.

BR: HOW DID JERRY TREAT YOU?

JJ: Lawler treated me...okay. He criticized me, but I took it as constructive criticism. There were times I felt like I deserved a little more use as far as the matches and things like that, but again, Jerry is from the old school and grew up with a lot of the older guys and is set in his ways about how the wrestling business needs to be run. I really base the fact that I wound up leaving Memphis, which turned out better for me, to his not wanting to book me anymore. He started using his brother-in-law, Jerry Calhoun and Frank Morrel at all of the big shows and it got to where I was booked only 2 or 3 times a week and it became impossible to survive.

BR: WHAT ABOUT JOS LEDUC?

JJ: Let me preface this about Jos LeDuc. I was a wrestling fan for at least 10 years prior to getting in the business. A lot of guys that were in wrestling were fascinated to work with certain people that they had always seen but they wouldn't admit that because they were afraid people were going to call them marks and things like that. I'll be the first one to say that I was very excited to work with the people that I did. I was really interested when I heard that Jos was coming into the territory. I didn't know what to expect because you're still believing a little bit of what you had seen and heard when you're a fan, but Jos turned out to be a nice guy. He and I lived next to each in Nashville and Jos had an efficiency and would cook all of the time and invite me over to eat and we rode to several of the towns together. He didn't like to be alone a lot. He was constantly telling me to come over or go to the Holiday Inn down the road. Jos was a super guy.

BR: WHAT ABOUT YOUR BUDDIES, THE MOD SQUAD?

JJ: They were working on top, then they would get mid-way, then back on top again. Around the summer of '86 Dundee was hired as a booker by Dusty and Crockett after they had purchased the rights to the Kansas City group. They brought Bill in to run that area for them and Dundee brought in several of the guys, including Jim and Mack. I ran into them again in Florida in '87 and they were on the last card I worked as a full time ref.

BR:THE MAJOR FUED IN MEMPHIS AT THE TIME WAS DUNDEE AND LANDEL AGAINST LAWLER AND IDOL. DID YOU REF ANY OF THEIR MATCHES?

JJ:It was drawing some great houses. Buddy and Bill had serious heat. I got to know Austin pretty well and he was a super guy. He's definitely a very independent person and I don't think that money talks with him. I think he turned down big money to be a company man, rather than work for somebody else fulltime. It was a good fued. Lawler can have a good match with anybody. Dundee is a lot more talented than people give him credit for, and Buddy is a great worker. I'd say that was the top match I worked in the territory.

BR:WHEN DID YOU WIND UP LEAVING MEMPHIS?

JJ:In May of '86 things were really getting slow for me. By the first week of June I had made the decision to go back home and I approached Lawler in the dressing room in the Mid-South Coliseum and let him know that after that week I was leaving. It didn't matter to Lawler, but I thought that out of respect for them I would at least let them know. About 10 minutes later Dundee called me aside and asked me how I felt about doing an angle where Bill would beat me up and get some color on top of that. They said that they would take care of me so I went ahead and did it. It was a barbed wire match with Bill and Buddy.

and the deal was that I was knocked down and groggy and I didn't realize that Dundee had already pinned Buddy, so when I turned around all I saw was Bill screaming as he was hooked in the figure four. So, I gave the match to Buddy and at that point Dundee attacks me and I took some good bumps. Bill used the blade on me, I really didn't want to do it myself, and we actually wound up doing that throughout the circuit all week. They took care of me on my last check. Jarrett made some comments on that and he was pretty pleased. I was glad for my days there. It was an excellent training ground before coming to Memphis.

BR:HOW DID YOU WIND UP IN FLORIDA?

JJ:I went home to South Carolina not knowing what was going to happen. My sister and I moved to Orlando and I assumed that I was finished in the business. Not more than a couple of weeks in Orlando I got a message that Pat Tanaka, who I had worked with in Tennessee, wanted me to contact Danny Miller, who was working in the Tampa office. I was ecstatic at this point and called Danny right away. He said that they were looking for another ref and wanted to know if I would come down to the Orlando arena so they could get a look at me. I was pretty excited. I worked a couple of matches that night and Bob Roop, who was the booker then, asked me to show up in Palm Beach the next night, and I did. I worked a couple more matches that night. At this point, they still hadn't officially secured me, but asked me to show up the following night in Tampa. I did, and after the matches Bob approached me and asked if I was interested in working full time. I jumped on the chance in a heartbeat, and from then on it went real well. I knew that I was working with a higher caliber of people, I knew that I was now affiliated with the NWA and that I would be working with some of the people that were probably the biggest stars in my mind. I got in on what I consider the tail end of the territory days.

BR:WHAT WAS LEX LUGER, THEN STILL A ROOKIE, LIKE?

JJ:Luger had been working a few months before I came to the territory. Roop had gotten him started in the business and when I got down there they were putting him over major. Lex is one of those guys that had instant star appeal. You'll have different people give different opinions on him, but Lex always treated me real good and I liked him.

BR:WHAT WAS ED "THE BULL" GANTNER LIKE?

JJ:Ed was really one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet. Sometimes I got the feeling that Ed really wasn't that happy to be in wrestling. He was making money, and for whatever reason he wasn't successful in either the NFL or USFL, perhaps he felt that this was his last shot at establishing himself in some sort of athletic organization. He trained very hard and listened very close whenever somebody tried to give him advice. Ed developed some health problems with his kidneys and was out for a few weeks at one point. They had taken some tissue samples out of his kidneys to try to determine the damage. He came back, but he was very limited and it was obvious that he was hurting. I think that anybody who's been around wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, can determine if a guy is on steroids or not. You can't develop the physique that a lot of these guys in the business have without some kind of chemical help. Now, I don't know to what degree Ed used steroids, you'll get differing stories, but the bottom line is that it deteriorated his health so bad that he suffered severe kidney problems and eventually committed suicide. There

has been articles written on Ed about his violent mood swings, but I was never around to see any of that. He seemed real easygoing. I saw fans slam him in the back of the head, punch him, kick him, and I never saw Ed go off on these guys.

BR:WERE YOU SUPRIZED WHEN YOU HEARD OF HIS SUICIDE?

JJ:I was suprized because I had not kept up on what his current condition was. I hadn't heard too much about him and I thought he was probably okay.

BR:WHAT WAS IT LIKE BEING A REF FOR A RIC FLAIR MATCH?

JJ:Around late 1987, the Crockett guys made their first swing through the territory. Bill Alphonso was also reffing with me. Even though I was still in my infancy as far as being a referee, Bill could tell that I had a real love for the business. Fonzie was a super guy and never felt threatened by me. He would actually go out of his way to try and help me. There were times when it was felt that perhaps I didn't have enough experience to do a certain match. Jacksonville was an example of that. Danny Miller came to me and told me that it might be better if I didn't do Flair's match, and that Alphonso should do it. Fonzie came to me and told me that I could do it, but the office disagreed. However, about a month later I worked with Flair for the first time in Miami. Flair was against Ronnie Garvin and it was a big thrill for me because I had seen Flair wrestle in person hundreds of times. I worked with Ric several times after that in Sarasota, Tallahassee, and a few six mans with The Road Warriors and Dusty. It was probably the highlight for me when after the Miami match he came up to me and told me that I had done a real good job. That really meant a lot to me, coming from him. He doesn't give to many compliments. He even made a comment during one of the matches. Ric has a habit of keeping his shoulders on the mat to about a 2 3/4 count, and its scary as a rookie referee to run the risk of screwing up. But any good booker or wrestler will tell you that you go in and referee that match like its a shoot. You've got your set rules and regulations, and even though its a work, there is rules and you follow them. A couple of times I hesitated coming down for the three count during that Flair match, and Ric mentioned during the match under his breath that I can't hesitate, and if his shoulders are down on the mat that I should just count to three. Roop told me the same thing. Fonzie too. Also Mike Graham and Dusty.

BR:DID YOU EVER SCREW UP A FINISH?

JJ:I screwed up a few finishes and any referee or wrestler that says they haven't is lying to you because you can go blank. Sometimes in the heat of things something can happen and a lot also depends what kind of condition the workers are in, whether they're straight or not sober in the ring, and things can mess up. Kevin Sullivan was the booker at one time and I remember messing something up and he pulled me aside and told me, Kevin was really straight up, I didn't understand what he had wanted. He told me not to be afraid to ask if I didn't understand. He told me that if he had to tell me ten times the finish, then he would do just that.

BR:SPEAKING OF SULLIVAN, HE PRETTY MUCH "OWNED" THE STATE WHILE YOU WERE HERE. WHAT WAS HE LIKE?

JJ:I like Kevin a lot. He treated me real well. Kevin can be rough on people because he believes in protecting the business and I respect him for that. A lot of "smart" fans these days that have only been smart for a couple of years don't really understand some of the things that went on in this business before. It was a very protected industry. Kevin liked to keep things straight and at times could be a little rough on some jobbers, but for the most part Kevin was a good guy and he wanted to see the promotion succeed just as much as anybody else. When angle needed to be ran he would definitely put a little of his personality into it. He's a legit tough guy and I wouldn't want to mess with him.

BR:WHAT ABOUT MIKE GRAHAM?

JJ:I don't want to sit through this interview and have me say that everybody was super, because thats bogus. Mike, to me, was always cool. Mike took over as booker from Bob Roop about Jan. '87, and Mike made it clear to me that he had no intentions of changing anything as far as me and Alphonso were concerned. I also did some outside work for Mike, he was also promoting some concerts at the time. He always took care of me.

BR:HOW WERE THE SHEEPHERDERS?

JJ:I loved those guys to death. They were really great. I shuddered one night when I was told to take a bump from one of them because they tended to work a little stiff. Luke broke my eardrum one night and I bled all over the place. They didn't mean to be so stiff, but it was like they just got so wild. I took several bumps from Kevin, and I thought they would be stiff, but they weren't. I never felt them, but when I saw them on tape they looked like they killed me. I always tried to make a bump look good. I didn't mind if it hurt a little.

BR:WHAT WAS BRUISER BRODY LIKE?

JJ:I was real excited when Danny Miller told me that he was heading in. He came in on a flight in to Tampa and was staying in a local motel. Bill Alphonso and myself went over and picked him up and all flew to Miami together. I was awed by the guy because he was such a legend in the business. I sat and just listened to him and probably absorbed more of his stories than anybody else. Frank was a down to earth guy and would look out for other people. You hear people say that Frank was only out for himself, and I only knew him a short time, but what I saw was a great human being. I asked Frank one night if it would be okay with him if I reffed his match. I had already gotten the okay from Fonzie. He Couldn't have been more supportive. It was really cool because he was working the original Sheik, Ed Farhat. It was a wild match, that's for sure. How old is The Sheik?

BR:I THINK HE LISTS HIS AGE IN THE LATE SIXTIES, BUT IT'S PROBABLY CLOSER TO HIS EARLY SEVENTIES.

JJ:So at that time he was in his mid-sixties, and it was a hell of a match. It was at the Miami Beach convention center and wound up going all over the place. There was legitimate concern on my part because the blood was flying everywhere, chairs everywhere, and I was staying out of the way. Brody really contributed a lot to this business and it's sad what happened to him. He was definitely an independent guy, no doubt about it. He did his own thing, and you've got to admire him for that. I respected him. I had never worked as an independent contractor before, and he helped me out with the IRS. He gave me a lot of good advice and was always willing to discuss anything with me, wrestling related or not.

BR:I KNOW THAT YOU WERE IN FT. LAUDERDALE THE NIGHT OF THE INFAMOUS BRODY-LUGER "SHOOT". WHAT HAPPENED?

JJ:I reffed on that card and I was in the dressing room when the match ended. I think when the match started, Brody had no intention of turning the match into a shoot. But that was one element of the guys personality where he could just decide he wanted to do something, and then do it. Luger was green and being put over huge and perhaps he began to develop a little bit of an attitude. He hadn't paid his dues, and maybe Frank resented that. So they got into the match, and Brody just decided he wasn't going to work with him or sell any of his stuff. You've seen the tape, I've seen the tape and Luger was legit concerned for his safety. He hopped out of the cage and went on back to the dressing room. He was pretty hot. I honestly can't recall was said in the dressing room, but I know that Lex left pretty quick. This was around Thanksgiving of '86 and we had a big holiday planned. It was going to

Be Brody and Luger again, but Luger had called the office and talked to Roop. I didn't hear the conversation, but I was in the room when Roop was talking to him. Luger basically told Bob that they could forget about him getting back in the ring with Frank. Luger said that he was crazy, that he didn't know what the hell he was doing, that he didn't understand it was a work, etc. Luger was a hot commodity to the Florida office, so they changed the program around, and wound up using "Bad News" Allen in Brody's place. I know that there was no further altercations between the two. Frank was just flexing his muscles a little bit. Just because your a big guy like Luger, doesn't mean that your tough. I just remembered another thing. The guys had also been ribbing Luger because Brody had a reputation on shooting on guys. Ray Candy, Barry Windham and others were the ones. Frank was a tough guy, and Lex knew that. I think that was in the back of Luger's mind. I've got mixed feelings on that incident. I'm a logical person so maybe there might have been another way to handle the situation.

BR:YOU WORKED WITH BARRY WINDHAM, WHO AT THE TIME WAS EMERGING AS ONE OF THE TOP WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY. WHAT WAS HE LIKE?

JJ:Here I go again putting people over. Barry really was a good guy. I showed up in Tampa when I got my ref job and I had no money, I hardly had a real place to live, heck, I didn't even have a car. Barry offered me a place to stay at his house in Riverview. What a phenomenal talent. He is one of the most gifted, talented athletes there is. He was really open with me and I knew that there was a lot of things I could ask him. He never put me down because I was green. I kind of got the feeling that Barry was just biding his time, waiting to be picked up by Charlotte or New York. He was a Florida boy, it's well known that Barry used to like to live in the fast lane and he was a single guy and he was really enjoying himself in Florida. This was one of the hot territories for the guys to come to because of the weather, the beaches, etc. Barry wound up going to Charlotte after the buyout and got a deserved push. He's looking more and more like his father everyday, though.

BR:DID YOU WIND UP DOING ANY SHOTS FOR CROCKETT AFTER THEY BOUGHT OUT THE TERRITORY?

JJ:They bought the territory in early 1987 and they decided to start their Florida "B" promotion in March. That was the last time I worked full time. I worked the rest of the year doing about 4 to 5 shots a month, getting paychecks directly from Jim Crockett. My first exposure on a permanent basis to the Charlotte office was how professional they were. Dusty would come down with his business papers, he would have his phone, his copier, his attache case, this guy would be preparing television, and had JJ Dillon working with him doing tv, doing flight plans. I thought to myself that this is great, this is what it's all about. I knew that I wasn't going to be doing it full time. They were set. They had Randy Anderson, who was Dusty's friend, they had Nick Patrick. They were pretty set. I was still glad to be a part of it. My acceptance within the NWA guys was really good. Dusty and I got along. He helped me out of a couple of jams that I had gotten myself into. Arn Anderson, Tully Blanchard, The Roadies, were all super guys. There I go again putting people over. It definately was the biggest houses I had ever worked.

BR:DID YOU EVER MAKE A PLAY TO GET WORK IN THE MAJORS?

JJ:I worked some dates in 1987, and in 1988-89 I really didn't do too much. There were a lot of administrative changes in the office and they didn't pass through Florida too much. In 1990 I got the call and worked a few more shots for the NWA in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Daytona. I had known Ron West who was a road agent at the time and he called me up. Mike Rotundo was on his way up to the WWF a couple of years ago and he talked to Jerry Brisco, but nothing ever came of that. Since then, I've had a few more shots and I worked a few indys around the state. I've basically been out of the business totally for over a year now.

BR:THE FIVE OR SIX YEARS YOU SPENT IN THE BUSINESS, HOW WOULD YOU SAY THAT IT'S CHANGED?

JJ:The product that's being offered for the public is totally different. The product is based on size, more of a glitzy color. There is definately a place for that. You have to have color and glitz, but the people are not seeing legitimate true pro wrestling. You've got guys like Terry Taylor that work underneath in WWF that on any given night could be the best worker there is. But, unfortunately, that is not what's reflected in the television tapings or the pushes. But, who are we to judge. If that's what's making money now, more power to them. You've got a lot of guys going around with sour grapes because their's not a slot for them anymore. It's primarily because they couldn't adapt to the changes. And personal problems have contributed to a lot of these guys not being wanted to work for the majors. I believe that wrestling will go back to the territory days and maybe that's evident by Cornette's group, and all of the groups in Texas and Florida.

BR:WHAT ABOUT THE ANIMALS AND GIMMICKS LIKE THAT?

JJ:That didn't real come around in the area's that I was involved with. 1991 and 1992 have been really strange years for the business because you've got some really weird things out there. The New York promotion has done it, but WCW is just as guilty.

BR:WHICH IS WORSE-TAKING A TALENTED AMATEUR WRESTLER AND MAKING HIM A LUMBERJACK OR A CLOWN?

JJ:One thing is for sure. If you're a guy in this business and you don't think that you can do anything else other than wrestling and that's your livelihood, then you're going to do whatever the promoter tells you. That's a decision that a guy has to make. To the 5,000 or so hardcore fans who might mock the strange gimmicks that McMahon comes up with, whose to say that the wrestler doesn't like it. Maybe Matt Borne likes dressing up like a clown. I don't know. Besides, it sells tickets and thats really what its all about. Borne has never really been a superstar. He's been pretty much of a journeyman. He's probably making more money now than ever before in his career.

BR:IF YOU GOT THE CALL TODAY FROM ONE OF THE BIG GROUPS TO RETURN, WOULD YOU GO?

JJ:If the money was right I would. But the field that I'm in now, I operate and manage a major hotel near Disney World, pays pretty well and I know that I'm doing a good job. I also know that if I got back into wrestling I could come back to this town and get a similar job.

JIMMY JETT
PRO WRESTLING REFEREE

ALL PROMOTIONS

THE NIGHT DUSTY RHODES CAME TO WILLISTON, FL. (POP. 1300)

BY BOB VAN KAVELAAR

I remember growing up as a kid watching wrestling on tv and thinking how "cool" it was. My favorite, at the time, was "American Dream" Dusty Rhodes. My biggest wish was to see a live show, but I thought that the matches only went to big cities like Tampa, Miami, and Orlando, and stayed away from smaller cities like Williston. One day, as I remember it, I was sent home from school and diagnosed as having strept throat. My mom and I stopped at the local drugstore to pick up some medication, when I noticed a blue posterboard in the window. The closer I got to the window I could see the words Wrestling. Wrestling was coming to my little part of the world, and I could've been more excited! To top it all off, Dusty Rhodes would be in the main event against the Funks. I counted down the days, waiting for Feb. 18, 1981 to arrive. I wondered to myself if Dusty would really show up or not.

Well, the big day finally came. I begged my mom to get me there as early as possible so I could see the wrestlers arrive. I remember waiting outside of the gym and being able to smell the popcorn. The bell rang signaling the first match and I hurried inside to my seat. Assassin #3 V. Reggie Parks was the first match. I enjoyed it, but after about seven minutes, the crowd was really dead. Suddenly, the crowd was worked into a frenzy. I wondered what was going on and stood on my seat to see what was happening. Dusty had entered the building. I'll never forget how I felt at that exact moment for the rest of my life. I waited excitedly for Dusty's match. He teamed with Barry Windham and faced Dory Funk Jr. and Assassin #1 (who replaced Terry). He did all of his signature moves, from the Bionic Elbow to the "kiss my butt" stuff. I went to sleep that night a happy kid and really grateful for the opportunity to see Big Dust.



B R A I N D R A I N

BY MIKE ALLEN

The opinions in this column are strictly mine; so fasten your seat belts and hold on.

This past week on the Monday Night Raw Show, The Steiner Brothers were scheduled to take on Money Inc. and win the tag belts. For reasons unknown at this time the match never took place although it was advertised in the N.Y. papers. One rumor says that the WWF is working to get its Pre Wrestlemania special on the USA network that Fox dropped and have the Steiners win the belts there.

After the cameras stopped rolling on the Raw show the Steiners took on the Headshrinkers and the Headshrikers gave the Steiners a beating but the Steiners won. It is good too see someone dish out some pain and punishment to the Steiners who are known to inflict pain and to try to hurt their opponents.

Is it me or are there other people out there who did not like Super Brawl? I just did not find myself getting into it, although it had its moments. Tony Schivone and Jesse Ventura did not work well together. Big rumor has it that when WCW comes to N.Y. in April that Sting will take the belt from Van Vader. Jim Ross resigned from WCW on Feb. 26th in a move that was expected after he was forced out of his front office and tv job. Larry Zbysko also resigned from the booking committee. Congrats to Larry and his wife who are the proud parents of a baby boy.

It is great to see that Ric Flair has returned to WCW. But reports are he will be held out of action till June. I do not understand that as Flair is clearly the man so get him in the ring with Barry Windham and Van Vader.

Further update on Hulk Hogan says that Vince McMahon has shelled out more bucks for Hulk to work some house shows in the summer. The WWF should try to get on without Hogan. Wrestling needs to move forward and the sooner the WWF dumps Hogan they can go forward and create a new product.

Next week on the Raw show Mr. Perfect will beat Rick Martel, Money Inc. will defeat Virgil and Tito Santana. The show which is taped for next week will then head to upstate N.Y. and return to Manhattan on March 22nd with Doink the Clown who has gained a cult following take on Bob Backlund, Bam Bam Bigelow will meet Tatanka and the Giant Gonzales takes on Kamala. Laugh at me if you wish but I like the Giant and he could be your next killer heel.

Marty Jannetty is over in Puerto Rico this week and he definately leaves some strange messages on his answering machine. The first time I tried to get in touch with him, he challenged the person who had been leaving him threatening messages and how he was shaking in his boots. Next time I called his message simply said What! I tried again and he claims he is out of town working on the Presidents Economic Agenda. I will keep you updated on his machine,

In the coming months I will keep you updated on all the latest news and also give you my sometimes warped perspective.